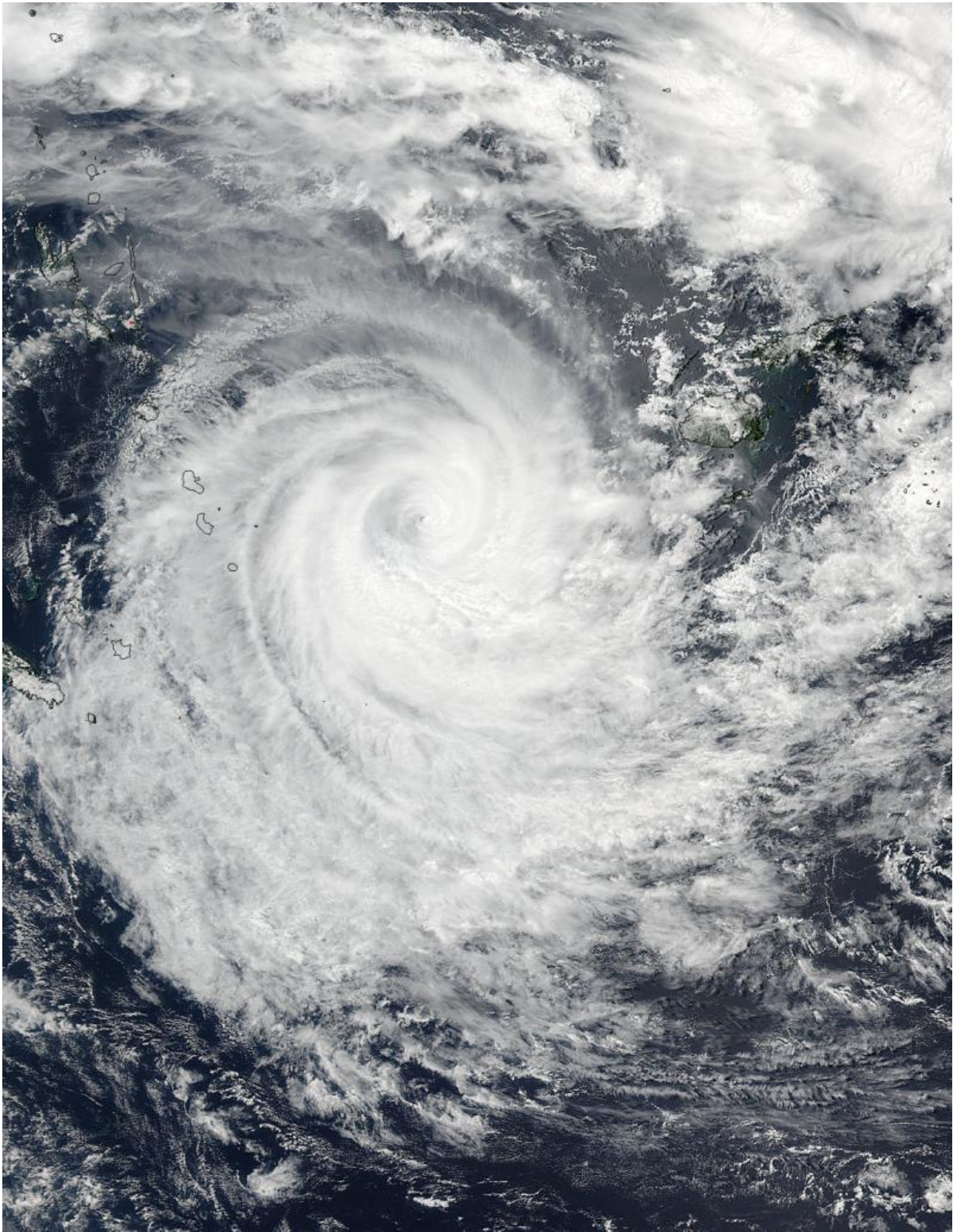


NASA sees pinhole eye seen in weakening Tropical Cyclone Winston

February 23 2016, by Rob Gutro



Tropical Cyclone Winston was moving past Vanuatu in the South Pacific Ocean

on Feb. 23, 2016 at 0140 UTC when NASA-NOAA's Suomi NPP satellite captured this image of the storm. Credit: NOAA/NASA Goddard Rapid Response

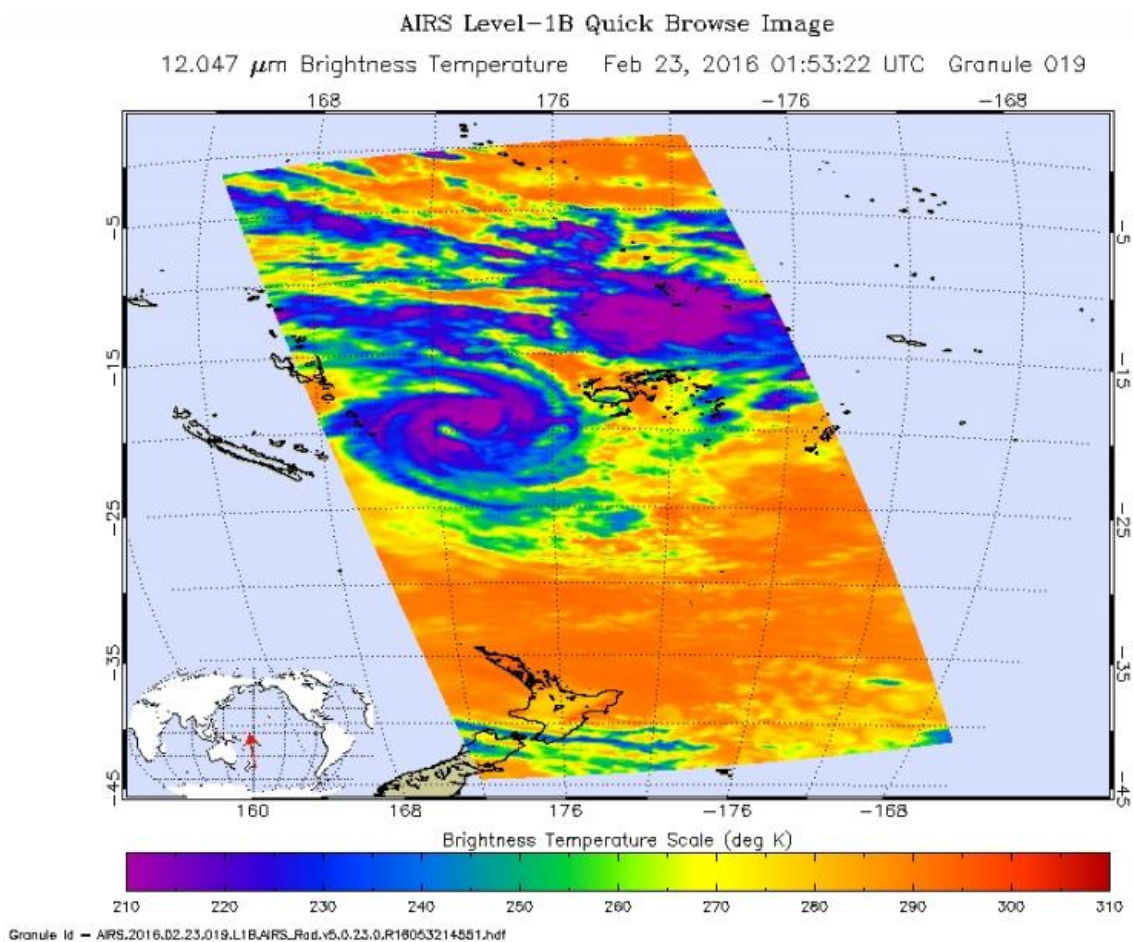
NASA-NOAA's Suomi NPP satellite saw that Tropical Cyclone Winston maintained a pinhole eye as it tracked east of southern Vanuatu's islands in the Southern Pacific Ocean on Feb. 23, 2016. Infrared imagery showed bands of strong thunderstorms were wrapping into the low-level center of the storm.

On Feb. 23, 2016 at 0140 UTC (Feb. 22, 2016 at 8:40 p.m. EST) the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) instrument aboard NASA-NOAA's Suomi NPP satellite captured a visible image of Tropical Cyclone Winston that showed a pinhole eye as it was moving east of Vanuatu's southernmost islands.

Animated enhanced [infrared satellite imagery](#) indicated a slowly-decaying low-level circulation center with curved strong bands of thunderstorms wrapping into the center of the storm. The Atmospheric Infrared Sounder or AIRS instrument that flies aboard NASA's Aqua satellite provided infrared temperature data on the system on Feb. 23, 2016 at 01:53 UTC (Feb. 22, 2016 at 8:53 p.m. EST). Some cloud top temperatures were colder than minus 63 Fahrenheit/ minus 53 Celsius, indicating they were high into the troposphere. Cloud top temperatures that cold have shown that those storms can produce heavy rainfall

Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) said that at 1500 GMT (10 a.m. EST) Winston's maximum sustained winds dropped to 70 knots (80.5 mph/129.6 kph) making it a Category 1 hurricane. It was located about 303 nautical miles (348 miles/561.2 km) west-southwest of Suva, Fiji near 20.7 degrees south latitude and 173.8 degrees east longitude.

Winston had increased in forward speed since Feb. 22, 2016 and was moving to the south-southeast to 9 knots (10.3 mph/16.6 kph).



On Feb. 23, 2016 at 01:53 UTC (Feb. 22 at 8:53 p.m. EST), the AIRS instrument aboard NASA's Aqua satellite saw some cloud top temperatures in Tropical Cyclone Winston were colder than -63F/-53C (purple), indicating they were high into the troposphere. Credit: NASA JPL, Ed Olsen

JTWC forecasters expect that Winston will turn southwestward to west-southwestward on Feb. 24, 2016 as it transitions to the steering influence

of a building sub-tropical ridge (elongated area of high pressure) to the south. Tc 11p is expected to weaken significantly after Feb. 24, 2016 as it encounters strong vertical wind shear and cooler [sea surface temperatures](#).

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

Citation: NASA sees pinhole eye seen in weakening Tropical Cyclone Winston (2016, February 23) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-02-nasa-pinhole-eye-weakening-tropical.html>

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